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ROY
THOMAS

CLAUDE
ST. AUBIN

ALLEN
NUNIS

UNDEAD
AGAIN!

THE FRANKENSTEIN DRACULA WAR™





THE FRANKENSTEIN DRACULA WAR

FRANKENSTEIN CREATED BY MARY SHELLEY

DRACULA CREATED BY BRAM STÖKER

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1796: THE CLOUDS OF
WAR DRIFT DARKLY OVER
EUROPE, AS FRENCH TROOPS UNDER
YOUNG
NAPOLEON
BONAPARTE--

PART 1: THE GATHERING STORM

--HAVE DRIVEN THE
AUSTRIANS OUT OF ITALY--
AND ARE FORCING THEM
BACK TOWARD VIENNA.

IN THE EAST,
THE TURKS ARE
BATTLING RUSSIA, WHOSE
NEW CZAR, ALEXANDER,
WISHES TO ANNEX
MOLDAVIA.

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AND, IN CASTLE
BOGDAN, ON THE
BORDER BETWEEN
MOLDAVIA'S NEIGHBORS,
WALLACHIA AND
TRANSYLVANIA...

...ITS PRO-TURKISH
BOYAR* HAS A
HIGHBORN VISITOR:

YOU KNOW
FULL WELL WHY
I HAVE COME,
DUKE BOGDAN...

...TO BEG THE
HAND OF YOUR
DAUGHTER MIRKA
IN MARRIAGE.

* "BOYAR" =
NOBLEMAN.
--LEN.

AND THE
ANSWER--
IS NO.

YES, I
EXPECTED AS
MUCH, COUNT
DRACULA...

BECAUSE I
REMAIN THE
IMPLACABLE FOE
OF THE TURKS,
WHOSE BOOTS
YOU KISS?

INSOLENT FOOL!
BECAUSE I KNOW
THE ABOMINATION
YOU'VE BECOME!

YOUR HOUSE
WILL NOT BECOME
ENTWINED WITH MINE
--NOT WHILE I LIVE!

THEN PERHAPS,
MILORD...YOU HAVE
LIVED TOO LONG.



YOU OVERSTEP YOURSELF TO THREATEN ME, COUNT-- PARTICULARLY AS YOU ARE IN MY CASTLE, NOT YOUR OWN!



SO IT WOULD...

...SEEM.

NO "SEEM" ABOUT IT!

YOUR FAMOUS ANCESTOR, VLAD TEPEȘ, IS REMEMBERED FOR IMPALING HIS ENEMIES!

IF I EVER SEE YOU AGAIN, YOUR HEAD WILL JOIN THE OTHERS OF MY COLLECTION ON THE RAMPARTS OUTSIDE!

GUARDS! ESCORT COUNT DRACULA OUT OF THE CASTLE-- AND OUT OF THE CITY!





PLEASE DO NOT
BOTHER YOUR
MEN TO SHOW ME
OUT, DUKE
BOGDAN.



I SHALL
LEAVE OF MY
OWN
ACCORD--



--IN A
MANNER OF
MY OWN
CHOOSING!



OH MY
GOD...



OH, MY LORD
AND MASTER...



...I DON'T BELIEVE IT, MIRKA!

YOU ACTUALLY WANT TO WED THAT-- DEVIL!?

BUT WHY, IN THE NAME OF ALL THAT'S HOLY?



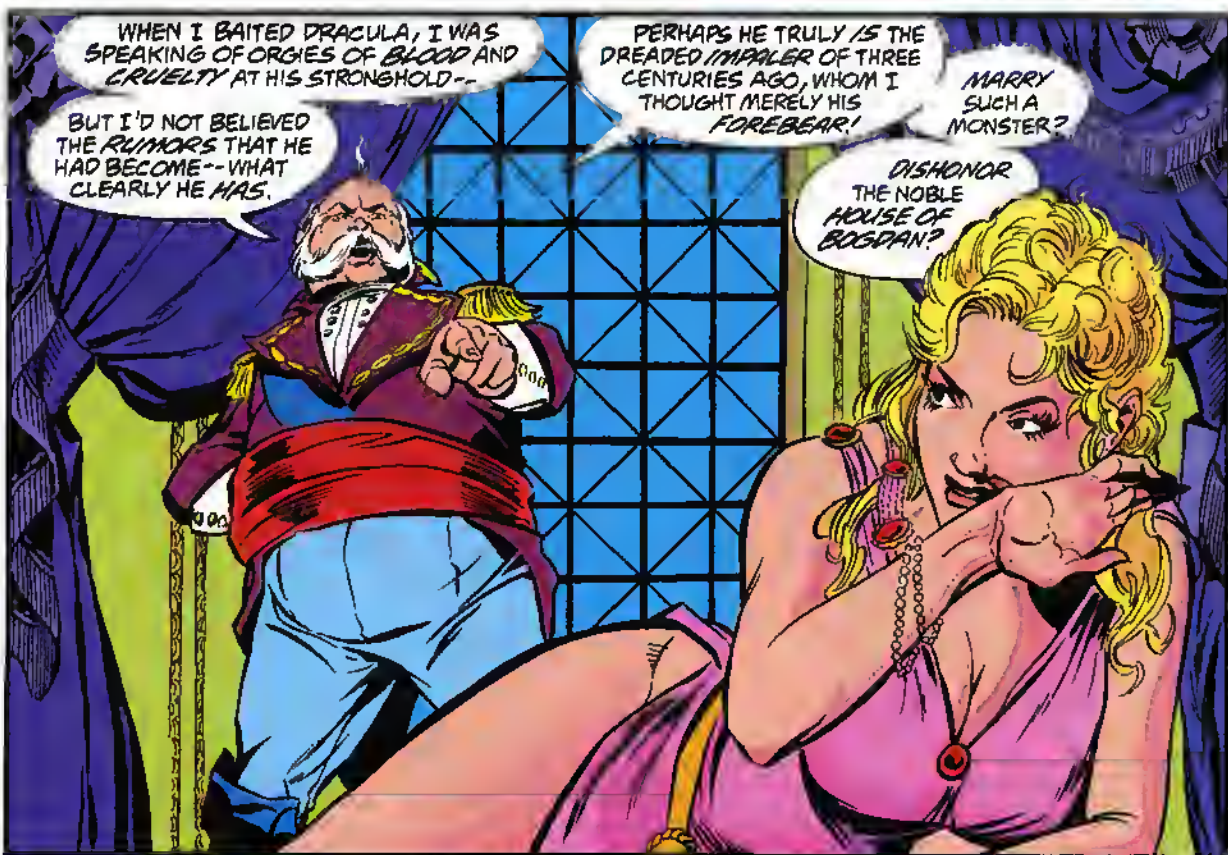
BECAUSE HE HAS COME TO ME SECRETLY, FATHER, AND OFFERED ME... ETERNAL LIFE.

WHAT CAN ANY OTHER MAN PROMISE THAT CAN COMPARE WITH THAT?

WANTON!



WITCH!



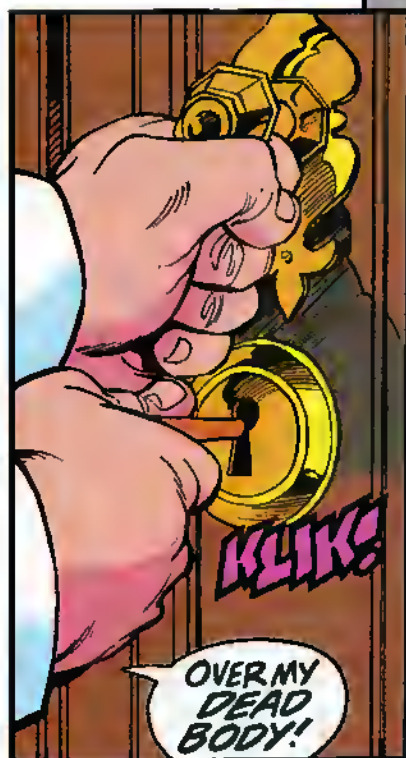
WHEN I BAITED DRACULA, I WAS SPEAKING OF ORGIES OF BLOOD AND CRUELTY AT HIS STRONGHOLD--

BUT I'D NOT BELIEVED THE RUMORS THAT HE HAD BECOME-- WHAT CLEARLY HE HAS.

PERHAPS HE TRULY IS THE DREADED IMPALER OF THREE CENTURIES AGO, WHOM I THOUGHT MERELY HIS FOREBEAR!

MARRY SUCH A MONSTER?

DISHONOR THE NOBLE HOUSE OF BOGDAN?



OVER MY
DEAD
BODY!



CAPTAIN
OF GUARDS!

YES SIRE?

READY A
SQUADRON OF
MEN--WITHOUT
DELAY!

I KNOW A THING
OR TWO MYSELF
ABOUT THE SO-
CALLED UNDEAD.

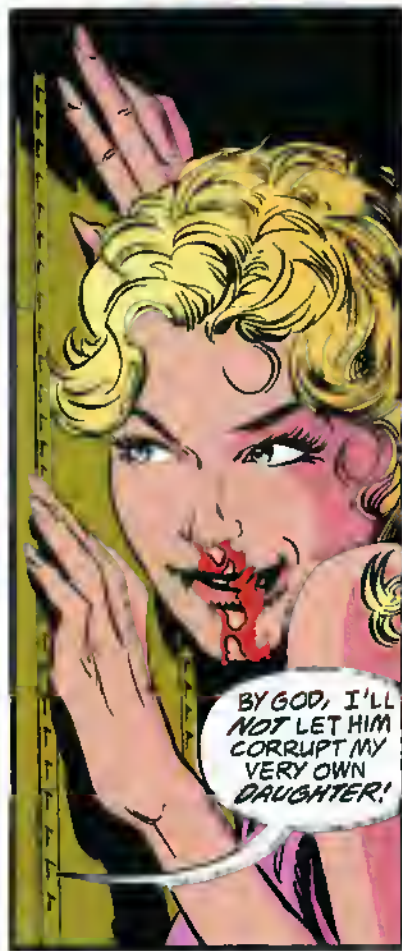


WE ARE GOING TO DO
WHAT I SHOULD HAVE
DONE YEARS AGO.

AT SUNRISE,
WE LEAVE FOR
CASTLE
DRACULA--



--TO IMPALE
AND BEHEAD
THIS--THIS
VAMPIRE--
WHILE HE RESTS
BY DAY IN HIS
CRYPT!



BY GOD, I'LL
NOT LET HIM
CORRUPT MY
VERY OWN
DAUGHTER!

WHILE NAPOLEON
BONAPARTE LAYS WASTE
THE SOUTHERNMOST
PROVINCES OF AUSTRIA...

... ONE SMALL REGIMENT
OF FRENCH FORCES HAS
TURNED ASIDE INTO THE
TRANSYLVANIAN ALPS.

THE LOOTING OF A
VILLAGE OF UNARMED
EAST EUROPEAN PEASANTS
IS FAR MORE TO THEIR LIKING
THAN FACING THE FORMID-
ABLE DEFENSES OUTSIDE
VIENNA.



IN WAR, PERHAPS ALL
MEN BECOME BRUTES
AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER...

ONLY A FEW ARE RAVENING
BEASTS FROM FIRST
TO LAST.

SUCH A
ONE IS
GILES
DE LA
CROIX.

STINKING
PIS-
FARMER!

NATURE MADE HIM GREAT OF
STATURE... NEARLY SEVEN FEET IN
HEIGHT.

BUT WAS IT NATURE-- OR
THE EXCESSES OF THE
REVOLUTION-- WHICH TURNED
HIM INTO THE MERCILESS FIEND
THAT EVEN HIS FELLOW SOLDIERS
CALL-- MONSIEUR MASSACRE?

MON
DIEU!

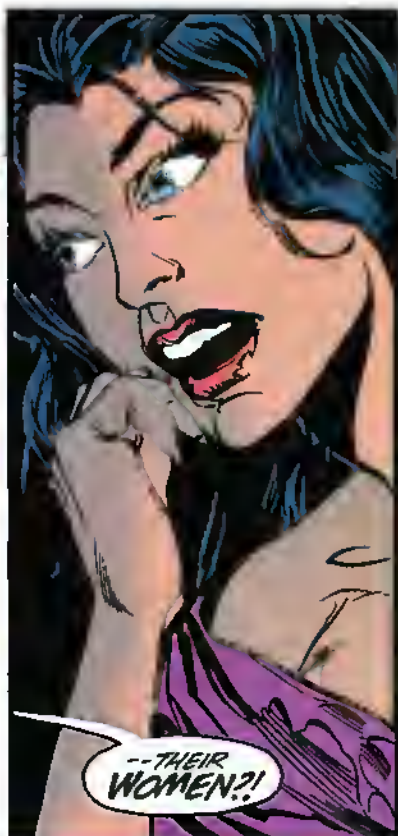
THESE ARE
NOT MEN, BUT
MATCHSTICKS
RIPE FOR THE
BREAKING!



WE'LL
CUT THEM
DOWN LIKE
RIPE
WHEAT--



--FOR HOW
ELSE CAN WE
GET TO--



--THEIR
WOMEN?!



SURELY THE SMALL HUT
OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE WILL
BE NO SAFE HAVEN
AGAINST THE RAPACIOUS
INVADERS.

YET THE YOUNG
WOMAN RACES TOWARD
IT AS IF IT HOUSED THE
ONE THING IN ALL
THE WORLD THAT
COULD PROTECT HER...



...AND PERHAPS IT DOES

YOU--YOU MUST
COME! **HURRY!**

THE FRENCH
ARE **SLAUGHTERING**
ALL THE MEN IN THE
TOWN!

WHY
SHOULD I
CARE--

--ABOUT
MEN?



WHAT HAS
HUMANITY EVER
BEEN TO THE **MONSTER
OF FRANKENSTEIN**--
BUT A FOUNTAIN OF
LOATHING AND MISERY--

-- SPEWING
FORTH A STREAM
OF HATRED
THAT I RETURN
IN **FULL
MEASURE.**

LET THEM
DIE!



IN THE VILLAGE...

I'LL
KILL YOU
ALL--

--LIKE
THE SQUEALING
SWINE YOU
ARE!



UNHAND
THEM!

WHO DARES TRY
TO TELL GILES DE LA
CROIX WHAT TO DO?



I DARE



GOD HELP US-- HE'S
EIGHT FEET TALL,
IF HE'S AN INCH!

DO YOU LITTLE
WEASELS THINK THAT
MATTERS TO ME?

I'LL
SHOOT THAT
PALE--



NO! HE'S
NOT THAT MUCH
TALLER THAN I--
AND I'D WAGER
HE WEIGHS A
BIT LESS.

IT'S BEEN LONG SINCE I
FACED A MAN WHO WASN'T
A DWARF NEXT TO ME!



STILL, WITH MY BARE
HANDS, I'LL
SQUASH HIM
LIKE A--

--BUG.



DETESTABLE
CREATURE!

MEN HAVE
CALLED ME
A FIEND-- A
MONSTER--
A DEMON--



YET THE WRONGS I HAVE DONE TO
MEN ARE AS NOTHING-- COMPARED
TO WHAT THEY HAVE DONE TO EACH
OTHER!

UNHHH



YOUR METAL BALLS HAVE HURT ME-- BUT ANY MORE YOU FIRE AT ME--

YOU'RE-- CRACKING MY RIBS--!

FIRST THEY WILL CRACK, YES--

-- AND THEN I SHALL HURL THOSE CRIMSON MISSILES AT YOUR FELLOWS!

-- WILL PASS THROUGH THE FLESH AND BONE OF YOUR CHAMPION!

THEN THEY WILL BREAK-- AND JUT FORTH THROUGH YOUR SKIN, RED AND DRIPPING--

AGGGGGK

AAAAA

THAT FLASH OF FLAME, COUNT SAINT-GERMAIN-- WHAT WAS IT?

HHNNH! PAIN-- LIKE RAGING FIRE-- IN MY BACK! WHAT--?

THAT'S NOT FOR THE LIKES OF YOU TO KNOW, SOLDIER.

SUFFICE IT TO SAY-- IT GOT THE ATTENTION OF THE THING CREATED BY VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN--

AND WHEN HE SEES I HAVE HIS PRECIOUS WENCH, I THINK WE'LL HAVE NO MORE TROUBLE FROM HIM!

FSSSH

A CASTLE HIGH
ABOVE THE
BORGO PASS...

ARE YOU
CERTAIN THAT
COUNT DRACULA--
OR ANYONE ELSE--
ACTUALLY LIVES
HERE, MILORD
DUKE?





NO ONE LIVES HERE, FOOL. I'VE TOLD YOU-- DRACULA IS A VAMPIRE--ONE OF THE UNDEAD!

THAT'S WHY HE HAS NO NEED OF SERVANTS--



--OR, SO HE THINKS, OF GUARDS!

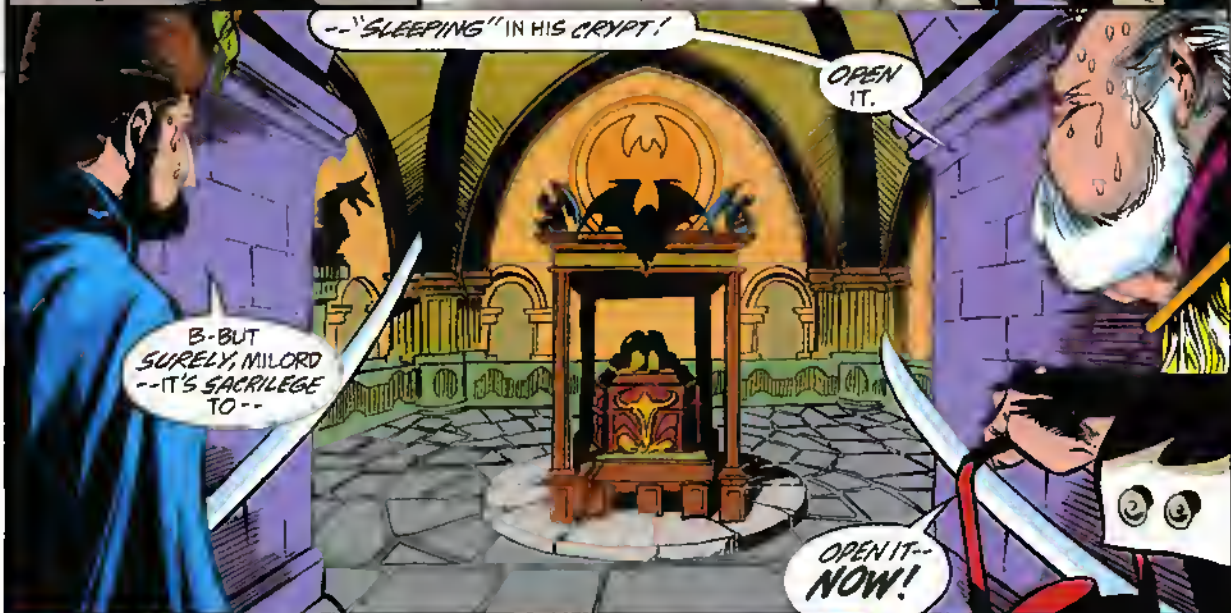
COME!

VAMPIRES? SURELY OUR LORD HAS GONE MAD, CAPTAIN!

I SINCERELY PRAY HE HAS!



IF HE'S AT HOME-- ACCORDING TO THE LORE-- WE'LL FIND HIM DOWN HERE AT MID-MORNING--



--"SLEEPING" IN HIS CRYPT!

OPEN IT.

B-BUT SURELY, MILORD-- IT'S SACRILEGE TO--

OPEN IT-- NOW!



...EMPTY!

BUT THEN WHERE IS HE-- ALIVE OR DEAD? HE--



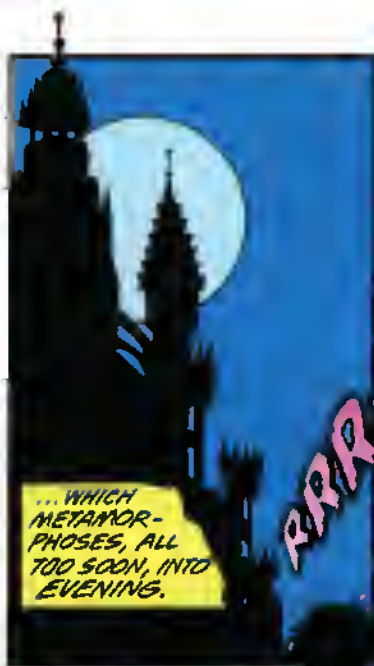
THAT PORTCULLIS! HURRY! WE MUST--



TOO LATE! WE'RE--

--TRAPPED,

IN TIME, MORNING BECOMES AFTERNOON...



... WHICH
METAMOR-
PHOSES, ALL
TOO SOON, INTO
EVENING.



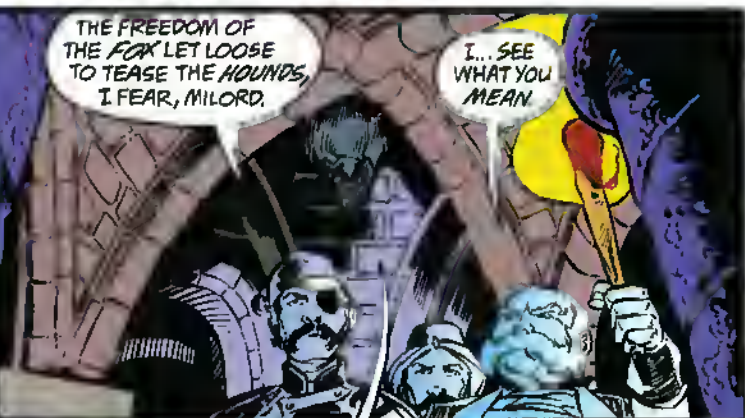
WE'RE
FREE
AGAIN!

RRRRRATTCH



KEEP
ALERT, ALL!
HE COULD BE
ANYWHERE.

AYE! AND,
VAMPIRE OR MAN--
HE'LL BEAR US
NO GOOD
WILL--



THE FREEDOM OF
THE FOX LET LOOSE
TO TEASE THE HOUNDS,
I FEAR, MILORD.

I... SEE
WHAT YOU
MEAN.



--FOR WHAT
WE'VE COME
TO DO.

URGGGG



WHAT
WAS THAT??

HE'S
HERE, I
TELL YOU!

HE'S--



--HEEEERE*

DEAR
LORD IN
HEAVEN...



WE ARE
IN MY CASTLE
NOW, DUKE
BOGDAN.

I HOPE YOU
APPRECIATE
THAT I MAKE
NO THREATS,
SUCH AS YOU
VOICED IN
YOURS.

GLADLY,
SIRE!

KILL
HIM!

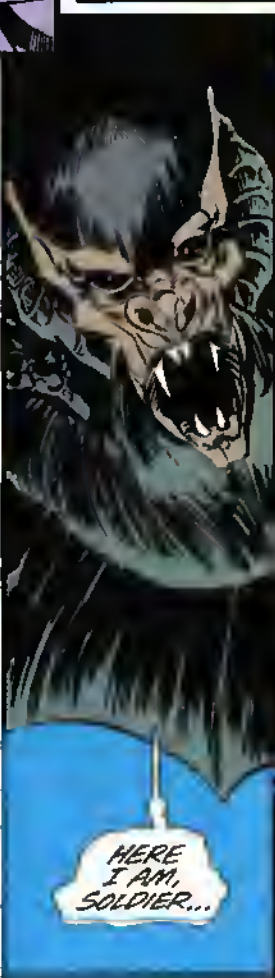


WHAT
THE
DEVIL--?



P-PROTECT ME, CAPTAIN!
I'LL GIVE YOU HALF MY
DUCHY!

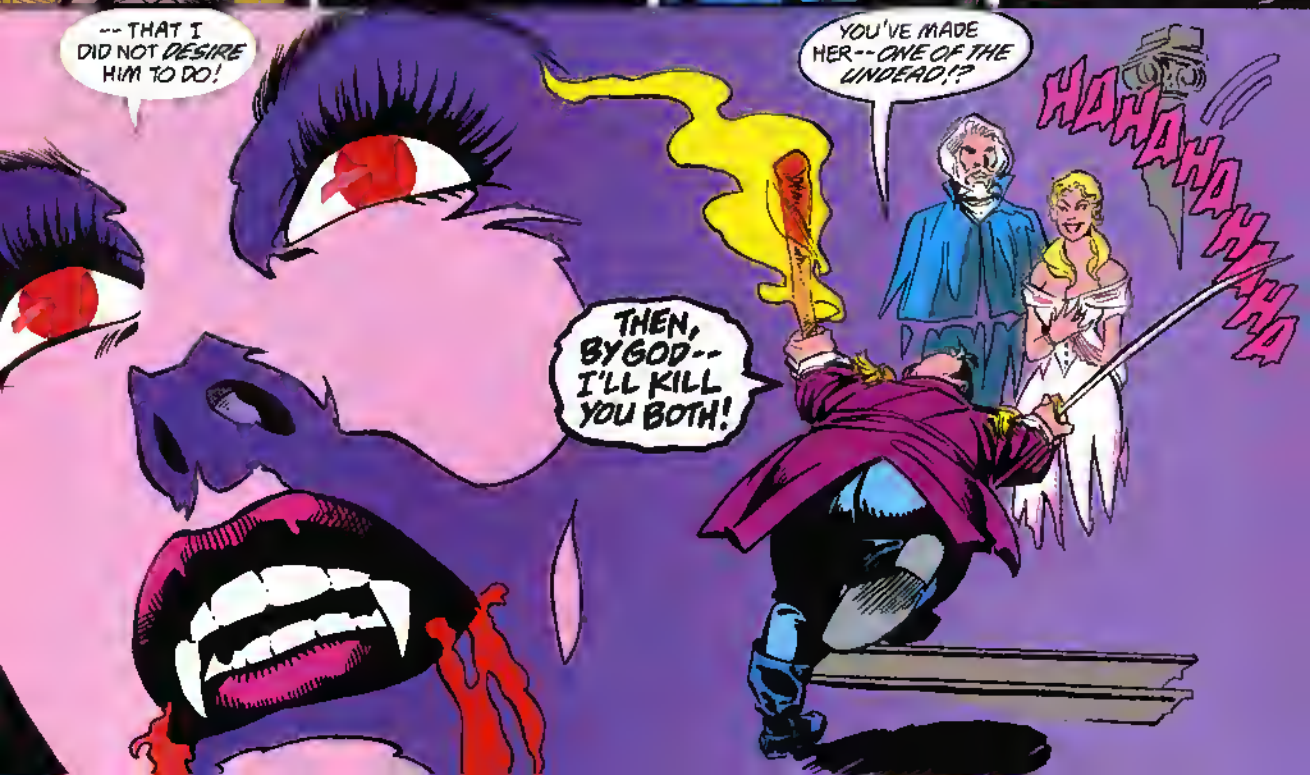
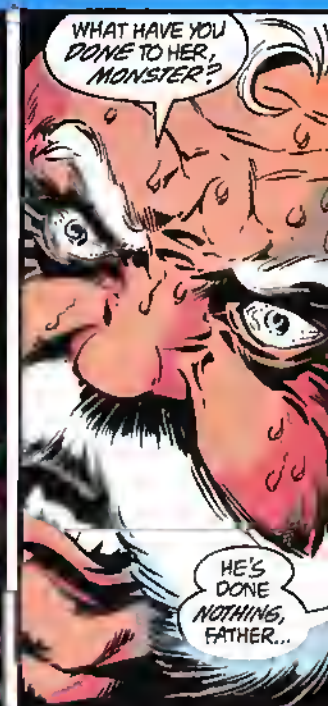
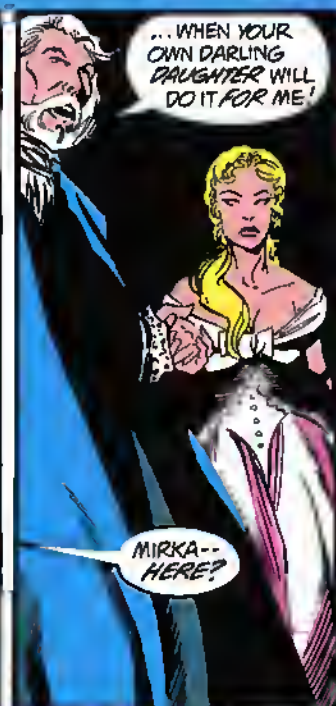
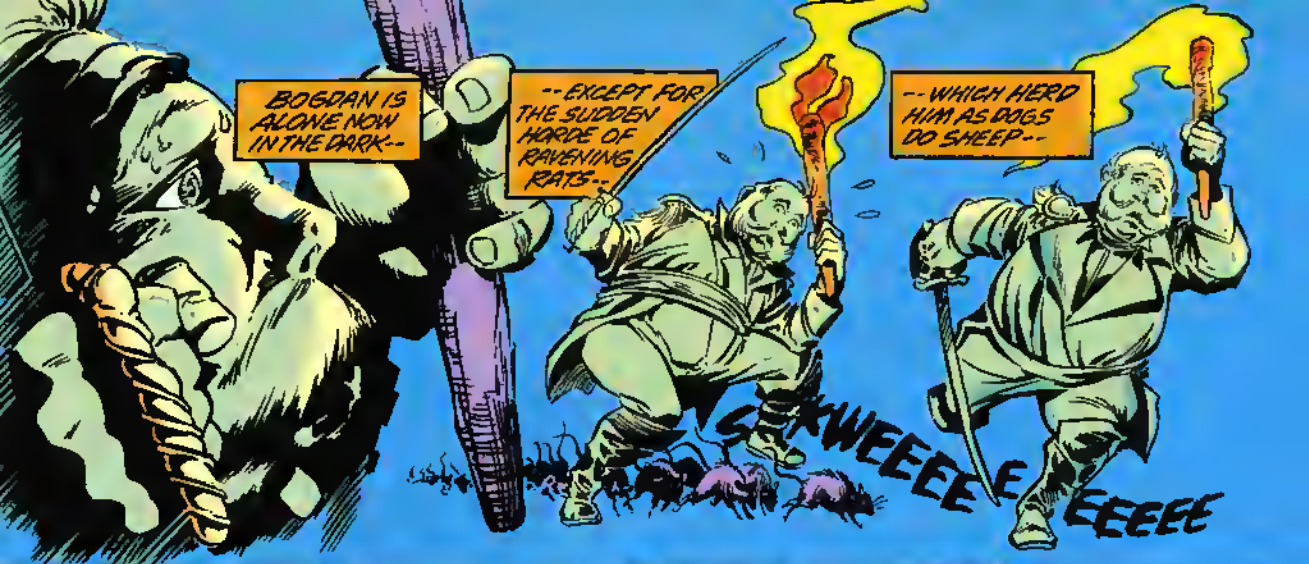
I'LL--
DO MY
DUTY,
MILORD--
BUT
WHERE-?



HERE
I AM,
SOLDIER...



...FAR CLOSER THAN
YOU WOULD WISH!



THE FINE HOUSE OF THE LATE BURGOMASTER OF THE TINY TRANSYLVANIAN VILLAGE IS NO CASTLE... BUT 'TIS ENOUGH... 'T WILL SERVE...

...FOR A CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO MOST EXTRAORDINARY ENTITIES... CHAPERONED BY SEVERAL VERY NERVOUS SOLDIERS OF BONAPARTE'S ALL-CONQUERING ARMY.

YOU... HAVE HEARD OF ME, COUNT?

I HAD THOUGHT THAT ALL KNOWLEDGE OF MY VERY EXISTENCE PERISHED WITH MY CREATOR.

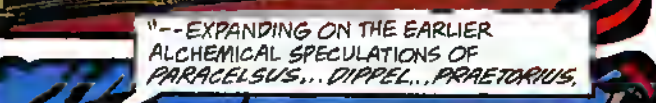
AND SO IT WAS, MY GARGANTUAN FRIEND-- AMONG THE MEWLING MOB OF MANKIND.

BUT I, THE COUNT DE SAINT-GERMAIN, AM NO ORDINARY MAN... AS I TRUST YOU ALREADY APPRECIATE.

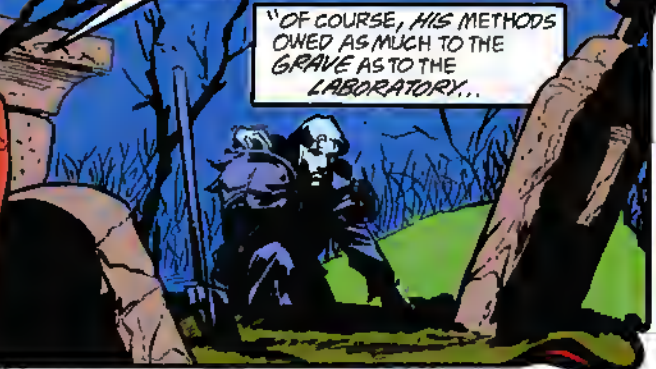
A FEW ALCHEMISTS AND PRACTITIONERS OF THE DARK ARTS IN EUROPE KNOW YOUR SECRET HISTORY...



"THEY KNOW OF YOUNG VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN'S PIONEERING WORK, ONLY A FEW SHORT YEARS AGO, IN THE CREATION OF LIFE--



"--EXPANDING ON THE EARLIER ALCHEMICAL SPECULATIONS OF PARACELSUS... DIPPPEL... PRAETORIUS,



"OF COURSE, HIS METHODS OWED AS MUCH TO THE GRAVE AS TO THE LABORATORY...



"BUT THEY WERE MORE THAN VALIDATED...



"AND WHEN VICTOR DESTROYED THE MATE HE HAD AGREED TO MAKE FOR YOU...



"...YOU MADE HIM LIKEWISE A WIDOWER, DID YOU NOT?

"--WHEN YOU ROSE FROM THE DISSECTING-TABLE, ON THAT DREARY NOVEMBER NIGHT!



IF IT MEANS ANYTHING TO YOU-- I BELIEVE YOUR CREATOR WAS UTTERLY GUTLESS.

HAD I BEEN IN HIS SHOES, YOU'D HAVE HAD YOUR MATE --AND HORDES OF GRAND-CHILDREN, WITH ANY LUCK.

EVEN MY SOURCES GET A BIT VASUE AFTER AN ANGUISHED VICTOR PURSUED YOU TO THE ARCTIC...



I LED HIM TO THE ICE WASTES--

--SO HE WOULD SUFFER EVEN MORE BEFORE HE DIED

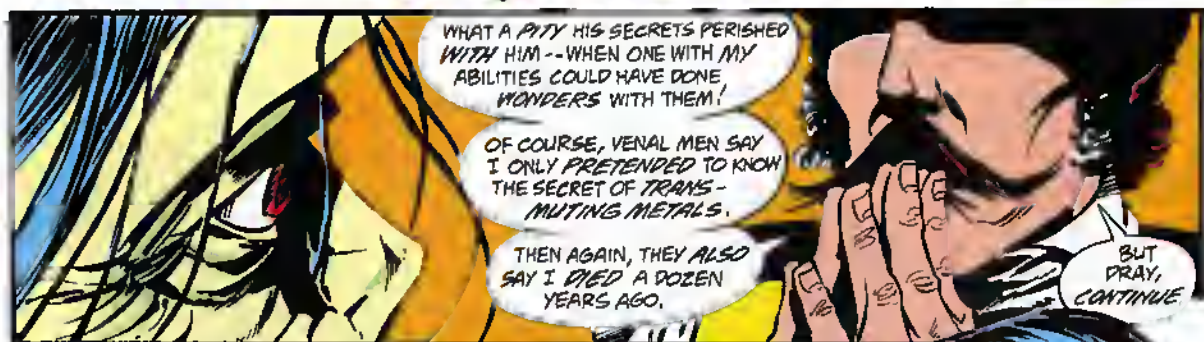


"BUT WHEN I BEHELD HIM LIFELESS--

"--I BEGGED FORGIVENESS OF HIS CORPSE...



"...AND WANDERED OFF, WITH EVERY INTENTION OF DESTROYING MYSELF."



WHAT A PITY HIS SECRETS PERISHED WITH HIM--WHEN ONE WITH MY ABILITIES COULD HAVE DONE WONDERS WITH THEM!

OF COURSE, VENAL MEN SAY I ONLY PRETENDED TO KNOW THE SECRET OF TRANSMUTING METALS.

THEN AGAIN, THEY ALSO SAY I DIED A DOZEN YEARS AGO.

BUT PRAY, CONTINUE



"I SOON LEARNED NEITHER MY OWN SKILLS NOR THE EXTREME COLD COULD END THE WRETCHED LIFE WITH WHICH I HAD BEEN CURSED.

"NOT EVEN THE GREAT ARCTIC BEAR COULD SLAY ME.

"WHEN ONE TRIED, I FOUND THE DESIRE TO LIVE RISING UP WITHIN ME... AND I BROKE ITS BACK."

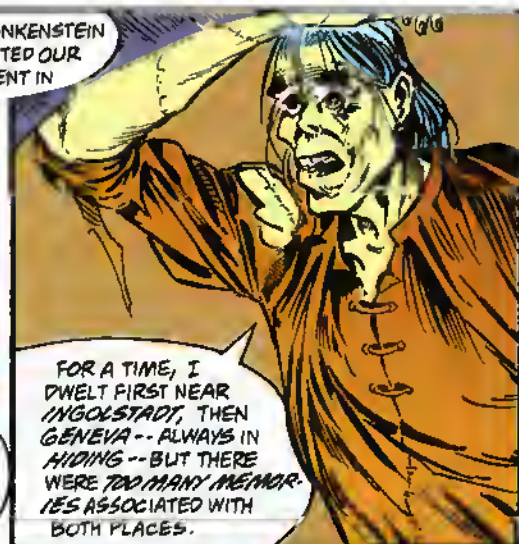
AND SO, I DECIDED TO RETURN TO MY HOMELAND.



MAIS ENFIN! THIS MONSTRO-SITY WAS BIRTHED-- HERE?

OF COURSE NOT. VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN WAS SWISS-- AND CONSTRUCTED OUR FRIEND HERE WHILE A STUDENT IN GERMANY.

SO HOW DID YOU COME TO BE IN TRAN-SYLVANIA, MON AMI?



FOR A TIME, I DWELT FIRST NEAR INGOLSTADT, THEN GENEVA-- ALWAYS IN HIDING-- BUT THERE WERE TOO MANY MEMOR-IES ASSOCIATED WITH BOTH PLACES.



AND SO, WITH BOTH WAR AND RUMORS OF WAR BLOWN ON THE WINDS FROM FRANCE, I STALKED EVER SOUTH-EAST.

SOME WEEKS AGO, I HAPPENED UPON ARIENNA-- BESET BY NIGHT-ROVING WOLVES



"THEY WERE NO MATCH FOR ME."



"I BORE HER BACK TO THE HOME OF WHICH SHE GASPED TO ME..."

...AND WHERE SHE TOLD ME HOW SHE CAME TO BE LOST IN THAT FOREST.

"SHE HAD LIVED IN THAT HOUSE, UNTIL RECENTLY, WITH HER FATHER AND BROTHER."

"AT LAST, SHE HAD GROWN TIRED OF BEING RAVAGED BY THEM, WHENEVER THEY WERE IN THEIR CUPS..."

"...SO SHE HAD POISONED THEM."



"IN SO SMALL A TOWN, THE SHROUD OF SUSPICION SOON DRAPED ITSELF ABOUT HER SHOULDERS."



"KNOWING THE VILENESS OF HER KIN, THE VILLAGERS DID NOT PUNISH HER... BUT THEY SOON CONVINCED THEMSELVES SHE WAS A WITCH."

"SHE WAS FORCED TO FEND FOR HERSELF... HENCE HER SOLITARY FORAGINGS INTO THE FOREST."

"IRENA IS WISE BEYOND HER YEARS."

"THOUGH REPULSED BY MY UGLINESS, SHE KNOWS THAT THE TRUE MONSTERS OFTEN LURK BENEATH GUISES OF SUPPOSED BEAUTY..."

"SO SHE TOOK ME INTO HER HOME, WHERE THE TOWNS-FOLK WOULD NEVER SEE ME."





“AHH! SO THE FAMOUS MONSTER FOUND HIS MATE, AT LAST!”



“YET, THAT ELIXIR NEEDS REPLENISHING--SO I WISHED TO COME HERE TO OBTAIN THE ONE INGREDIENT I NEED TO MAKE IT A LIQUID OF ETERNAL LIFE--”

“--THE UNDER HEART OF COUNT DRACULA!”



“YOUNG GENERAL BONAPARTE TRUSTS ME, BECAUSE I HAVE PREDICTED FOR HIM A GREAT FUTURE...”

“...AND HE GAVE ME MEN FOR MY JOURNEY TO TRANSYLVANIA.”

“NO--DO NOT TELL ME IN WHICH SENSE THAT IS TRUE.”

“SOME THINGS I DO NOT CARE TO KNOW... EVEN THOUGH, LIKE YOUR CREATOR, I AM A MAN OF SCIENCE.”

“BUT I AM ALSO A MAN OF MAGIC--AND DEVELOPED AN ELIXIR OF LIFE WHICH HAS KEPT ME HAIR AND HEARTY FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS.”

“I ADMIT--EVEN I WAS SOMEWHAT DAUNTED AT THE PROSPECT OF DOING BATTLE WITH ONE I KNOW TO BE A VAMPIRE.”

“BUT YOU WILL MAKE MY TASK SO VERY MUCH EASIER--”

“--IN THE INTERESTS OF KEEPING YOUR DEAR IRENA FROM AN EARLY GRAVE!”

“I TRUST WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, N'EST-CE PAS?”





NOT MANY NIGHTS
LATER, IN THE
WILD CARPATHIAN
MOUNTAINS...

... A GREAT,
GAUNT FIGURE
STRIDES TOWARD
A TOWERING
CASTLE.



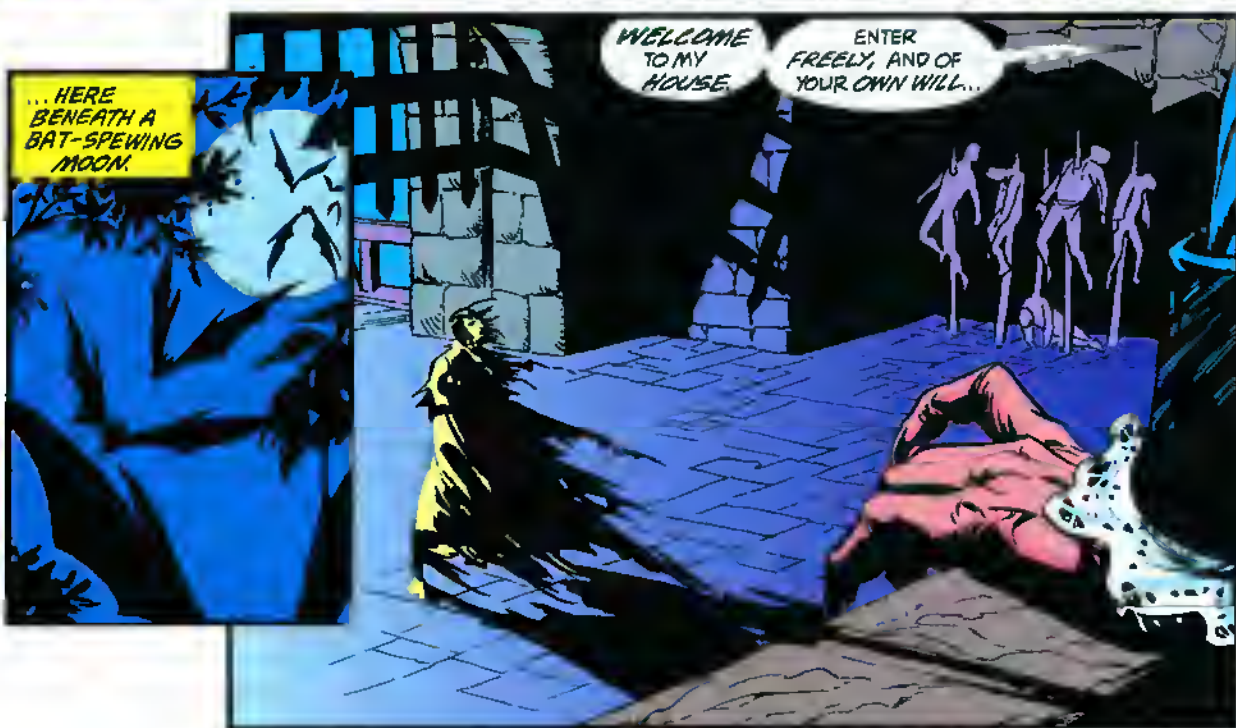
THE WAY IS
OPEN TO HIM,
AS IF HE WERE...
EXPECTED.

THERE IS EVEN
SOMEONE OUTSIDE
THE GATE TO GREET
HIM... ALBEIT IN
SILENCE.



STILL, THE STAKE
UPON WHICH THE
DEAD OLD MAN
HAS BEEN
IMPALED
SPEAKS
MOST
ELOQUENTLY.

BEYOND DOUBT,
THE MONSTER
SPAWNED BY FRANK-
ENSTEIN HAS
FOUND THE PLACE
HE SOUGHT...



... HERE
BENEATH A
BAT-SPEWING
MOON.

WELCOME
TO MY
HOUSE.

ENTER
FREELY, AND OF
YOUR OWN WILL...



I AM
DRACULA!

NEXT:
FOES--OR
ALLIES?

A CREATURE...

...AND TWO COUNTS

A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE BY ROY THOMAS

It seems as if I've loved Dracula and the Frankenstein Monster nearly all my life.

My first exposure to them was, not surprisingly, the movies. No, not the Bela Lugosi "Dracula" or the Boris Karloff "Frankenstein" of the early 1930's, or even one of the many Universal sequels. My first glimpse of both creatures of the night took place in the very same film. Its name: "Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein."

This isn't the place to go into paeans of praise about that picture: one either loves it or one loathes it, it seems. I loved it in 1948, in a darkened theatre, at the age of seven, and I've loved it each of the dozen and more times I've seen it since then.

When I was a kid, it made me laugh and it made me shiver, often at the same time. And it holds up like a champ! Not just the Frankenstein Monster and Dracula, but the Wolfman, too — with Lugosi playing the sinister Count for only the second time, and the Monster played by Glenn Strange, easily the best after Karloff himself.

The comedy part of the movie was one of Abbott and Costello's best vehicles (and revitalized their career, through lesser "A & C Meet Whatever" pictures over the following several years) — while the "horror" storyline was superior to the previous two "all-star," allegedly more serious, efforts "House of Frankenstein" and "House of Dracula." Neither of those had Lugosi, for one thing.

Anyway, over the next few years, I would occasionally see trailers for the original Universal monster series, almost invariably at a special Halloween showing, which at first I was considered too young to attend. Eventually, I did see "Frankenstein," "Dracula," and all the rest — most of them initially in movie theatres, I'm

happy to say, not on TV, where the two dreaded "C's" — commercials and cutting — tended to ruin them.

"Dracula" was pretty good, especially Lugosi and the cackling Dwight Frye as a Jonathan Harker crossed with Renfield; and Boris Karloff and makeup man Jack Pierce and director James Whale together made "Frankenstein" a scary revelation. And I was amazed to find that, in some ways, "Bride of Frankenstein" was an even better picture. Then, when the Hammer horror flicks began to appear in the late '50's, I thought Lee a great Dracula (if not much of a Frankenstein Monster), but by then, my standards had changed somewhat.

By then, I had read the books.

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was a truly horrifying read to me in high school. I remember being a bit disappointed that after "Jonathan Harker's Diary" the Count all but vanishes from the foreground, but it still became one of my favorite books. I recall being mildly sick in bed while finishing it. The water-operated vaporizer which was releasing fumes designed to open my sinuses suddenly burbled just as I was reading the climactic scene in which van Helsing and the "suitsors" kill Dracula in his mobile coffin. I nearly jumped out of my skin.

Somewhere along the line, I read Mary Shelley's masterpiece, too. Our local small town library — which was a true wonder, possessing a nearly complete collection of such series as the original Tom Swift and the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs (a real rarity in those days) — seems to have possessed two editions of *Frankenstein* — one contained photos from the Universal film; the other was illustrated by Nino Carbe, whose non-Karloffian drawings were easily the best depiction of the book's key scenes until Bernie Wrightson turned his nimble fingers to the task.*

I never lost my love for those two marvelous monsters over the years.

As #2 editorial man of Marvel Comics, one of my last acts in 1971, prior to going off to a New Year's Eve party, was to take a sentence-or-two long notion by head honcho Stan Lee and turn it into the plot for the first issue of the long-running *Tomb of Dracula* comic. I had no interest in dialoguing the mag — heck, I didn't even ask for a plotting credit, with the result that whenever that issue's reprinted all the payment goes to the dialoguer — because, love Drac though I did, it never occurred to me it would actually be fun to script a comic about him. Soon, as editor in chief, I made my second and final contribution to *Tomb of Dracula*, by bringing together the team of Marv Wolfman, Gene Colan, and Tom Palmer; the result was one of Marvel's best long-running series ever.

A year later, I decided that Marvel's *Frankenstein* comic should start off with an adaptation of the novel. By now, I'd probably have done it myself, but I was busy with editorial duties. No matter. Mary Shelley was excellently served by Gary Friedrich and Mike Ploog, in several issues reprinted last year.

However, when it came time to start Marvel's black-and-white comic, *Dracula Lives!* I contributed a few stories I especially wanted to do, such as a meeting between Drac and Robert E. Howard's swashbuckling hero Solomon Kane, and an encounter with Marie Laveau, the voodoo queen of little ol' New Orleans, in a tale written soon after I'd made one of my perennial visits there.

And, in 1974, artist Dick Giordano and I teamed up to begin what was to be a long, serialized adaptation of Dracula in *Dracula Lives!* Dick and I are exceedingly proud of our half-completed version, which ran to about one hundred pages: even after twenty years, we still dream of being allowed to finish it one day.

For years after that experience, though, I rarely thought about Dracula or the Frankenstein Monster, at least in comics form — though artist

Ron Harris and I eventually plopped an authentic-looking and -talking version of the Monster into an issue of the DC comic *The Young All-Stars*, set in 1942!

And while Gerry Conway and I were writing (and, more happily still, selling) movie scripts in Hollywood in the early 1980's we pitched a faithful adaptation of *Frankenstein* to at least one producer, who exhibited a faint modicum of interest. However, his eyes glazed over (producers' eyes tend to do that) when we said the movie should be a period piece, set nearly two hundred years earlier. There's an old-time movie-mogul saying: "People don't like movies about people who write with feathers." I guess this producer didn't think they'd like a movie about a monster that wrote with feathers, either.

I recall that we had the casting of the Monster firmly in mind, too: Richard Kiel, the talented seven-foot-plus actor who had played the villain "Jaws" in two James Bond films. A few years earlier, I'd been involved in an abortive project with Kiel. Since Frankenstein's Monster is supposed to be eight feet tall, and somewhat gaunt, it was my contention that, love the Karloff version though I did and do, there had never been a really good screen approximation of Mary's Monster — nor, for that matter, had there ever been a really good movie adaptation of either *Frankenstein* or *Dracula*. Anywhere. Anytime.

Then, in late 1991 my wife Dann and I were only days from moving ourselves and several dozen animals from Los Angeles to the middle of South Carolina when I received a phone call from Len Brown, my friend since 1965 and once my roommate in his native Brooklyn. Len had been working for Topps since 1959, in New Product Development, where he'd been involved in comics-related products like Batman bubble-gum cards, Wacky Packs, and the like. He'd also written the first two tales of the superhero Dynamo for the *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* comics in the 1960's; the late great Wally

Wood had even named Dynamo's secret identity for him. Len had long wanted to see Topps get into comics, and now, with publisher Ira Friedman at the helm, they were about to plunge in with both feet.

I declined an invitation to be interviewed for the chief editorial spot, suggesting instead they talk with some guy named Salicrup (whatever happened to him, anyway?), but I leaped to attention when Len invited me to script Topps' first comic: an adaptation of the forthcoming Francis Ford Coppola film, "Bram Stoker's Dracula." I accepted at once, and must admit I like the four-issue comics series Mike Mignola and I did even better than I did the movie. James V. Hart's screenplay was good, and Coppola's a marvelous director, but I was never quite content with the humanized romance between Dracula and Mina Harker.

As our comics adaptation was winding down, editor in chief Jim Salicrup (oh, so *that's* what happened to him!) asked me to write a several-issue comics biography of Vlad Tepes, the historical Dracula, with artist Esteban Maroto. I happily concurred, though I got permission to sneak in an origin of the vampiric side of Dracula in the final issue of DRACULA: VLAD THE IMPALER.

We planned to continue Topps Comics' Dracula with a series in which he met Elizabeth Bathory, often hailed in articles and even movies as "The Blood Countess" or even "Countess Dracula" (though she bathed in virgins' blood a good century after Vlad Tepes' death); but Topps got busy in other areas, and that outline still sits on the shelf, awaiting the right moment.

Then, along came Coppola's production of "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein," to be directed by Kenneth Branagh, and I was delighted to get a chance to script that adaptation, as well, with editor Renée Witterstaetter lining up Rafael Kayanan and Rick Magyar for the art chores. The movie was an artful, lavish, reasonably faithful rendering of the story, although no Frankenstein Monster less than eight feet tall is ever going to

satisfy me visually.

During the course of writing that adaptation, Len and I began to talk about a continuation of Frankenstein as a follow-up, even bringing in Dracula; and THE FRANKENSTEIN/DRACULA WAR was born. My wife Dann contributed greatly to the original concept. And when it came time to flesh out the story from an early outline, I enlisted the talents of my friend and oft-collaborator Jean-Marc Lofficier as co-plotter. Being French by birth (if American by naturalization), Jean-Marc — with his wife Randy, the other half of "R.J.M. Lofficier" — had some interesting perspectives on the Napoleonic Wars which were raging in Europe soon after the time of Mary Shelley's novel.

Jean-Marc, who's knowledgeable about the literature of the occult, also suggested we add a second count to the mix: the infamous but more or less historical personage, Count Saint-Germain, who was born circa 1710 and seems to have died around 1784, though he claimed to be far, far older. Saint-Germain also pretended to know the secret of turning lead into gold, and was known in the 18th century as "der Wundermann" ("the Wonderman").

Though we tossed in a bit of magic-slinging by the alchemist, we made every attempt to treat THE FRANKENSTEIN/DRACULA WAR as a sequel not to the recent films, but rather to the original novels on the one hand — and Topps' DRACULA: VLAD THE IMPALER three-issue series on the other. At the time of WAR, Dracula is 300 or so years old as a vampire (plus around a half century of previous, human life) — while the Frankenstein Monster is maybe eight, if we accept the timeline worked out by expert Leonard Wolf in his 1977 volume, *The Annotated Frankenstein*.

(Wolf's earlier *Annotated Dracula* was useful, too; I met the author when the two of us appeared on back-to-back episodes of the TV show "To Tell the Truth" in '76, and I'd love to run into him again to tell him how helpful those two

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

books have been to me over the years — as they have to the movies.)

The Monster, despite his relative youth, had to be as articulate in our comics as he became over the course of Mary Shelley's epoch-making novel; he's also had another year or two of experience at living since he was "lost in darkness and distance" at the end of the novel. While this is a Dracula to whom van Helsing and London are approximately a century in the future, a Dracula who has traveled (at least as a vampire) not at all out of his Wallachian/Transylvanian homeland. He has not yet even acquired the sizable library of books in English which he'll later put together with an eye toward relocating in England, to get some "new blood" into his life.

That new blood would turn out to be — the Monster created by Victor (not Henry!) Frankenstein.

And, as artists, we welcomed aboard the talented team of Claude St. Aubin and Allen Nunis, who in my opinion had made the recent series CADILLACS AND DINOSAURS: MAN-EATER! one of Topps Comics' best.

All the elements were now in place — and the war between Dracula and the Frankenstein Monster could begin.

Want to see more of the Frankenstein Monster and/or Count Dracula in the pages of Topps Comics? Send those bouquets and/or brick-carrying bats to:

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